Fruit of the Spirit: Peace

Section I: Introduction: The Illusion of a Peaceful Life

Let me paint a picture for you from a show that defined childhood for millions of people in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The program was called Double Dare, a wild Nickelodeon game show where teams of kids competed in messy obstacle courses, answered trivia questions, and got absolutely covered in green slime, whipped cream, and goo. The host, Marc Summers, stood right in the middle of all that chaos with a big smile on his face, microphone in hand, laughing and cheering the contestants on as if he were having the time of his life. He looked completely at peace in the middle of the biggest mess on television.

What almost no one knew at the time was that Marc Summers was secretly battling a severe case of obsessive compulsive disorder, specifically a crippling fear of germs known as mysophobia. Every single time the cameras stopped rolling, he would rush off stage, sometimes stripping down right there in front of the crew to scrub himself clean because the very mess that made the show famous felt like absolute torture to him. On the outside he appeared calm and confident. On the inside he was anything but at peace.

Friends, that story captures the exact illusion many of us chase today. We look at someone else's life, whether it is a television host covered in slime or a neighbor who seems to have it all together, and we think, "If only my circumstances were different, then I would have peace." We scroll through social media, watch influencers promote perfect mornings and stress free lifestyles, and we convince ourselves that peace will arrive the moment we finally eliminate every problem, every mess, every discomfort. Yet the harder we chase that problem free version of life, the more exhausted and anxious we become.

Expectations of perfection take your peace. The truth is that we were created to solve problems. In Genesis 1:26 it says, "Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." We carry a built in responsibility to rule and subdue this world, which means problems are not a sign that something has gone wrong with your life. Problems are the very arena where your God given destiny unfolds. There will always be problems. Psalm 23:4 tells us, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me." We are not promised a life that avoids the valley, we are promised the presence of God while we walk straight through it. Seeking a peaceful life by

trying to eliminate every single problem is a fool's errand. The greater your destiny, the greater your problems will be.

This is why the peace Jesus offers is so different from anything the world can give. Listen to His own words in John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." And then again in John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world." Notice what Jesus does not say. He does not promise to remove every tribulation. He promises to give us His peace right in the middle of it. This is not the world's vision of peace that depends on perfect circumstances. This is supernatural peace that stands firm even when the times are turbulent and the storms are raging.

Today we are going to explore this peace from every angle. We will see the unique peace Jesus gives, we will understand why problems are normal, purposeful, and inevitable, we will discover how to have peace in the middle of the storm, we will learn how to defeat worry and fear at their root, and we will put into practice five practical guardrails that protect our peace every single day.

My prayer is that by the end of our time together you will stop chasing the illusion of a trouble free life and instead receive the peace that Jesus has already left with you. Let's open our hearts to what God wants to say.

Section II: The Unique Peace Jesus Gives

Now let us turn directly to the words of Jesus Himself so we can see exactly what kind of peace He offers. Listen carefully to John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful." And then hear Him again in John 16:33: "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world."

These are not casual promises spoken on a sunny hillside. Jesus gave these words on the night before His arrest, the night before the cross, the night when everything the disciples had counted on was about to fall apart. He knew the storm was coming, yet He chose that moment to hand them His peace. That alone tells us something powerful. This peace is not a reward for getting life under control. It is a gift He leaves with us right when life feels most out of control.

As we look at this peace from every angle, you will see how different it is from

anything else we chase. Spiritually, it comes straight from Jesus, the Prince of Peace. It is not something you manufacture by arranging perfect circumstances or by removing every difficulty. It is supernatural. It flows from His finished work and from who He is. Emotionally, it speaks straight to the two things that trouble our hearts the most. Jesus says do not let your heart stay troubled and do not let it stay fearful. He does not deny that trouble and fear will knock on the door. He simply commands us not to give them the keys to the house. Contextually, these verses were spoken knowing full well that the disciples would soon face betrayal, scattering, and grief. Jesus did not wait until the storm passed to offer peace. He offered it while the storm was still gathering and soon to arrive.

Most importantly, this peace can only be received and sustained when we are rooted in God's faithfulness and faith in His promises. Our peace does not rest on shifting situations or on how well we manage our problems. It rests on the unchanging character of the God who never fails and on the covenant promises He has spoken. When we anchor our selves in who God is and in what He has already said, peace becomes an internal reality that circumstances cannot revoke.

Think about the contrast for a moment. The world's version of peace is temporary and fragile. It depends on everything lining up just right, on the mess staying outside the door, on the slime never touching us. Jesus' peace is the opposite. It thrives inside the mess because it is anchored in something far stronger than the circumstances. It is the deep, abiding shalom that says, "I have already overcome the world, so the world does not get the final word in your heart."

Here is the practical question each of us must answer today: are you still trying to control your environment in order to manufacture peace, or are you receiving the peace Jesus has already provided through simple faith in His faithfulness? One path leaves you exhausted and anxious every time a new problem appears. The other path lets you walk through every problem with a calm that the world cannot explain and cannot take away.

This unique peace is the foundation for everything else we will explore. Once we understand what Jesus actually offers, we are ready to see why problems are not the enemy of peace but the very place where His peace proves real.

Section III: Problems Are Normal, Purposeful, and Inevitable

Now that we understand the unique peace Jesus gives us, we are ready to see why problems are not the enemy of that peace. In fact, problems are normal, purposeful, and inevitable in this life.

We were created to solve problems. Right at the beginning of the Bible, God gave humanity a clear assignment. Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” This verse shows us that we were made in God’s image with the responsibility and authority to rule and bring order to the world around us. That means we were designed to face problems and to solve them.

Problems are not a sign that something has gone wrong with your life. They are the very arena where your God given destiny unfolds. There will always be problems in this broken world. Psalm 23:4 tells us, “Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil, for You are with me, Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.” Notice that God does not promise to keep us out of the valley. He promises to walk through the valley with us. We walk straight through the problems, not around them, and God’s comforting presence goes with us every step of the way.

Seeking a peaceful life by trying to eliminate every single problem is a fool’s errand. The greater your destiny, the greater your problems will often be. The bigger the assignment God has for you, the bigger the challenges that will come against it.

Let me illustrate this with something many of us can understand. Ships in the harbor are safe, but ships in the harbor are meant for the seas where they will inevitably encounter storms. In the same way, we were not created for a sheltered, problem free existence. We were created to rule and solve problems on the open seas of real life, and our peace is displayed most clearly when we sail those seas with Jesus right beside us.

Problems are not the enemy of peace. They are the context in which the peace of Jesus proves genuine and powerful. Once we accept this truth, we can stop being surprised by difficulty and start learning how to have peace right in the middle of the storm.

Section IV: Peace in the Middle of the Storm

Once we accept that problems are normal, purposeful, and inevitable, we are ready to discover how the peace Jesus gives can actually thrive right in the middle of the storm itself. Two powerful stories from Scripture show us this truth in action, one from the Old Testament and one from the life of Jesus. Let us look at them closely so we can see how peace works when everything around us feels out of control.

The first example comes from the life of the prophet Jonah. God had called Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and preach a message of repentance, but Jonah did not want to obey. Instead he ran away, boarded a ship headed in the opposite direction, and tried to hide from God. Jonah 1:4 tells us what happened next: “The LORD hurled a great wind on the sea and there was a great storm on the sea so that the ship was about to break up.” In the mist of the storm, that Jonah knew God caused, he was fast asleep. Despite being in disobedience to God he had perfect trust in God. The sailors were terrified and began throwing cargo overboard to lighten the ship. They eventually discovered that Jonah was the reason for the storm, so they threw him into the sea as he had told them to do. At that moment Jonah 2:1 says, “Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish.” God had appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and from inside that dark, chaotic place Jonah cried out in prayer. After three days the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land, and he was delivered. What this story reveals is that peace did not come to Jonah after the storm ended or after he reached the shore. His peace was established in God before the storm arrived, even though he was still in the middle of the consequences of his own disobedience, and still surrounded by chaos. Jonah kept his peace and the ability to pray even in the most unlikely and frightening place imaginable.

The second example is even more direct because it involves Jesus Himself. Turn with me to Mark 4:35 through 41. Jesus and His disciples had been teaching all day by the Sea of Galilee. As evening came Jesus said to them, “Let us go over to the other side.” They got into a boat and began to cross the lake. While Jesus was in the stern of the boat, a fierce storm suddenly arose. Waves were breaking over the boat and filling it with water. The experienced fishermen among the disciples were afraid they were going to drown. Yet right in the middle of that chaos, Jesus was also sound asleep on a cushion. In panic the disciples woke Him up and said, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?” Jesus got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” Immediately the wind stopped blowing and the sea became perfectly calm. Then Jesus turned to His disciples and asked, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?” The men were amazed and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?”

These two stories explore the reality of peace in the storm from every angle. Spiritually, they remind us of the promise in John 16:33: “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” Jesus has already overcome the world, so the storm never gets the final word. The same Lord who calmed the sea with a single command is the One who gives us His peace. Emotionally, the stories show that fear and peace cannot occupy the

same space when our eyes stay fixed on the One who commands the elements. Jonah had perfect peace even when God's judgment was upon him, and the disciples had no peace even though Jesus right in the boat with them. In both cases Jesus and Jonah had peace in the storm. Practically, these storms reveal whether our peace is built on comfortable circumstances or on Christ Himself.

The clear implication is powerful. Peace is possible in the middle of the storm precisely because the Master of the storm is with us. He does not promise to keep away every wave. He promises to be in the boat, to speak calm into the chaos, and to give us the courage to trust Him while the wind is still howling. Once we see that peace can exist inside the storm, we are prepared to address the internal enemies that still try to steal that peace from us, worry and fear.

Section V: Defeating Worry and Fear at the Root

Now that we have seen how the peace Jesus gives can thrive right in the middle of the storm, we must address the two internal enemies that most often steal that peace from our hearts, worry and fear.

Jesus speaks directly and forcefully about worry in Matthew chapter 6. In Matthew 6:25 He says, "For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink, nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" He goes on to remind us that the birds of the air do not sow or reap yet our heavenly Father feeds them, and the lilies of the field do not toil or spin yet God clothes them in splendor. Then in Matthew 6:33 and 34 Jesus gives the clear solution: "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."

Worry is practical unbelief. It is what happens when we stop trusting that God is faithful and that He will provide. Instead of resting in God's promises, worry keeps our minds spinning on things we cannot control. It robs us of peace today while trying to solve problems that may never come tomorrow. Or it's a tax we pay today on tomorrow's troubles.

Fear is equally destructive. Whatever you fear, you make your god. Isaiah 8:12-13, "You are not to say, It is a conspiracy, in regard to all that this people call a conspiracy. And you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is the LORD of hosts whom you should regard as holy. And He shall be your fear, and He shall be your dread."When something or someone rules your heart through fear, God will at times give you over to that fear. Jeremiah 1:17

says, “Now, gird up your loins and arise, and speak to them all which I command you. Do not be dismayed before them, or I will dismay you before them.”

The antidote is simple. We make the Lord our only fear and dread. God will most often use exposure therapy to help His people overcome fear. This forces the person to confront their fears and breakdown the godlike visage that the fear was given.

Let me walk you through the full story of Gideon so you can see exactly how God takes a man paralyzed by fear and leads him step by step into triumph and peace. The nation of Israel was in a desperate situation. For seven long years the Midianites had been raiding the land like locusts, destroying crops, stealing livestock, and leaving the people starving and terrified. Judges 6:1-2 tells us the situation clearly: “Then the sons of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD gave them into the hands of Midian for seven years. The power of Midian prevailed against Israel. Because of Midian the sons of Israel made for themselves the dens which were in the mountains and the caves and the strongholds.”

Gideon himself was hiding in fear. Instead of threshing wheat out in the open where the wind could carry the chaff away, he was beating out the grain inside a winepress, a low, enclosed pit, hoping the Midianites would not notice him. That is how afraid he was. Yet right there in that hiding place God showed up. The angel of the LORD appeared to him and said, “The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.” Gideon immediately questioned God because nothing in his circumstances looked like victory. He replied that his family was the least in Manasseh and he himself was the youngest in his father’s house.

God did not argue with Gideon’s fear. Instead He gave him a direct command and a promise. He told Gideon to go in the strength he had and deliver Israel from the Midianites. When Gideon asked for a sign to confirm it was really the LORD speaking, God waited patiently while Gideon prepared an offering. Fire came from a rock and consumed the offering, proving the word was from God. Then came the moment of reassurance that changed everything. Judges 6:23-24 records, “The LORD said to him, Peace to you, do not fear, you shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.” Gideon went from hiding in terror to building a public altar and declaring that the LORD Himself is Peace.

But God was not finished building Gideon’s courage. He immediately gave Gideon his first assignment, one that would require facing fear head-on. That very night Gideon was told to tear down his own father’s altar to the false god

Baal and replace it with an altar to the LORD. Gideon did it at night because he was still afraid of his family and the men of the town, yet he obeyed. The next morning the town wanted to kill him, but his father defended him and the crisis passed.

Each new step God gave Gideon was larger than the last, a deliberate process of exposure that replaced fear with faith. Gideon asked for two more signs with the fleece on the ground, first wet while the ground stayed dry, then dry while the ground was wet. God answered both exactly as requested, strengthening Gideon's trust. When it was time to fight, God told Gideon to call out an army. Thirty-two thousand men showed up, but God said the number was too large. He reduced it first to ten thousand, then to only three hundred. Judges 7:2 explains why: "The LORD said to Gideon, The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, My own power has delivered me."

With just three hundred men, no swords in their hands but trumpets, empty jars, and torches, Gideon received the battle plan from a dream he overheard in the enemy camp. He divided the men into three companies, surrounded the Midianite camp at night, and at the signal they blew their trumpets, smashed the jars, waved the torches, and shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" The Midianites panicked, turned on one another, and fled. A great victory followed, and Israel was delivered.

Look at what happened in Gideon's journey. Spiritually, God never shamed Gideon for starting in fear. He met him exactly where he was and called him to something greater. Emotionally, each obedient step exposed the fear, weakened its power, and replaced it with peace rooted in God's presence and promises. Practically, God used gradual exposure, small acts of courage that grew into bold leadership, exactly the way He often works with us today. Gideon went from hiding in a winepress to leading three hundred men to victory because he learned that the LORD is Peace.

That same God still walks people through their fears one obedient step at a time. When we root ourselves in His faithfulness instead of our feelings, worry and fear lose their grip, and the peace Jesus promised becomes our daily reality.

Scripture is very clear that God does not call His people to live as cowards. Revelation 21:8 warns, "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

We must defeat worry and fear at their root by being deeply rooted in God’s faithfulness and faith in His promises. Spiritually, worry and fear are forms of misplaced worship that say something else is bigger than God. Emotionally, they slowly erode the peace Jesus has given us until we replace fear and worry with trust. Practically, God builds courage in us through small, obedient steps of exposure, just as He did with Gideon.

When we choose to fear the Lord alone and trust His promises more than our circumstances, peace displaces anxiety at its source. Once we learn to defeat these internal thieves of peace, we are ready to put into practice five practical guardrails that will help protect and maintain the peace Jesus has given us every single day.

Section VI: Five Practical Guardrails to Protect Our Peace

Now that we have received the peace Jesus gives, embraced problems as normal and purposeful, learned how to keep peace in the middle of the storm, and defeated worry and fear at their root, we are ready to put into practice five practical guardrails that will help protect and maintain the peace Jesus has already provided. These are not complicated rules but wise daily choices that limit anxiety and honor the authority God gave us in Genesis 1:26. Let us walk through them one by one.

1. Eliminate unnecessary problem people from your life.Most of the problems we face come from other people, so the fewer people who have unrestricted access to you, the fewer problems that will be generated. Reduce exposure to those God has not assigned to you and let them know the door is no longer wide open. Jesus modeled this perfectly. In John 6 many disciples stopped following Him after He taught about eating His flesh and drinking His blood. The teaching was difficult and they turned away. Jesus was neither sad nor disappointed. He accepted that they were not part of those the Father had given Him.

John 6:64-65 NASBS
Jesus said, “But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

John 17:24 records His prayer, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.” This is not unloving rejection but wise stewardship of the peace Jesus entrusted to you.

2. Be proactive and do not be passive.Use your authority under Genesis 1:26 to take control of situations and master them rather than letting life hit you passively. God said in Genesis 1:26, “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” This dominion mandate is still in effect today. Step forward in faith, exercise that God-given responsibility, and address what you can address instead of waiting for problems to overwhelm you. Passivity is a choice you make and turns manageable issues into mountains of anxiety. Peace grows when we actively rule rather than merely endure.

If your weight or health is taking your peace, then be proactive and take steps to address those issues. If you don’t, the people who don’t care about you will make those decisions for you. Do you think Little Debbie or McDonald’s care about your health? They want your money and will gladly give you a heart attack in order to fill their pockets with your money. If you decide to let others decide your health decisions, that is a decision you made under Genesis 1:26.

Another example is personal safety. Under Genesis 1:26 every person on earth has the God given right to chose to harm you. If you chose not to have the ability to defend yourself that is a choice that you made under Genesis 1:26, and God must let you suffer the consequences of your choices.

3. Deal ruthlessly with procrastination.Procrastination functions as an eternal fountain of worry and anxiety, creating unnecessary problems and stealing peace. It delays obedience and multiplies stress. A sobering example is found in the life of Moses. God had called him to lead Israel out of Egypt, yet Moses kept putting off the full obedience God required. Exodus 4:24-26 tells us, “Now it came about at the lodging place on the way that the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and threw it at Moses’ feet, and she said, You are indeed a bridegroom of blood to me. So He let him alone. At that time she said, A bridegroom of blood to you by circumcision.” Moses’ procrastination nearly cost him his life until he finally acted. Spiritually, delay disobeys the dominion call. Emotionally, it keeps the mind in constant unrest. Practically, immediate responsibility restores calm. Peace flourishes when we stop postponing what we know we should do today.

4. Ask for help.God did not design us to solve every problem in isolation. We are called to help bear one another’s burdens and to work together. Matthew 18:20 promises, “For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst.” When we gather in Jesus’ name and share the load,

His presence multiplies peace and invites divine help into our situations. Community turns overwhelming problems into shared responsibilities and replaces lonely worry with supported strength.

5. Stop creating additional problems for yourself.Avoid self-inflicted trouble through loose speech, meddling in matters that are not your concern, or any other unnecessary entanglement. Proverbs 18:6-7 warns, “A fool’s lips bring strife, and his mouth calls for blows. A fool’s mouth is his ruin, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” Loose talk invites trouble that could have been avoided. Likewise, Luke 12:14 shows Jesus refusing to get involved in someone else’s family dispute. Someone in the crowd asked Him tell his brother to divide an inheritance, but Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbitrator over you?” Simple wisdom, such as knowing when to remain silent and staying out of matters that do not concern you, preserves the peace Jesus has given.

These five guardrails are not suggestions. They are practical ways to cooperate with the peace Jesus offers. When we apply them consistently, we limit the sources of anxiety and create space for the supernatural calm of John 14:27 and John 16:33 to guard our hearts every single day.

Section VII: Conclusion and Response

We have now walked through the full picture of the peace Jesus offers. We began by seeing the illusion of a trouble free life and how the story of Marc Summers showed us that outward calm can hide deep inner turmoil. We then received the unique peace Jesus gives, the supernatural gift rooted in God’s faithfulness and faith in His promises, as declared in John 14:27, “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you, not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful,” and in John 16:33, “These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” We learned that problems are normal, purposeful, and inevitable because we were created in God’s image to rule and solve them under the mandate of Genesis 1:26. We discovered how to have peace in the middle of the storm through the stories of Jonah and Jesus sleeping in the boat while the waves raged. We confronted worry and fear at their root, seeing how God patiently led Gideon from hiding in terror to bold victory, building an altar and naming it The LORD is Peace. Finally we received five practical guardrails to protect that peace every day: eliminating unnecessary problem people, being proactive instead of passive, dealing ruthlessly with procrastination, asking for help, and stopping the creation of additional problems for ourselves.

The journey is clear. The peace Jesus gives is not the absence of problems. It

is His presence and His calm inside the problems. It is the deep shalom that stands firm when the slime is flying, the storms are raging, and the fears are loud. It is the peace that says the Lord Himself is with us in the valley, in the boat, and in the winepress of fear.

Return with me now to the moment when Gideon stood before the Lord. After receiving the word of reassurance, Judges 6:23-24 records, “The LORD said to him, Peace to you, do not fear, you shall not die. Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and named it The LORD is Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.” Gideon did not wait until every enemy was gone and every fear had vanished. He built the altar right there in the middle of his battle, right where the fear had been strongest, and he declared that the Lord is Peace. That same declaration is available to you today. Whatever storm, whatever problem, whatever worry or fear you are facing right now, you can build your own altar in your heart and name it The LORD is Peace.

So here is the simple response God is calling us to make right now. First, receive the peace Jesus has already left with you. Let us pray together this very moment. Heavenly Father, thank You for the peace Your Son Jesus gives us, not as the world gives but as only He can give. Right now we receive that peace into our hearts. We root ourselves in Your faithfulness and in Your promises. We choose to stop letting our hearts stay troubled or fearful. Fill us afresh with the calm that comes from knowing You have already overcome the world. In Jesus’ name we pray, amen.

The peace of Jesus is not a distant hope. It is a present reality for every person who will receive it, embrace problems as part of God’s design, trust Him in the storm, defeat worry and fear through faith, and guard that peace with wisdom. Go from this place today knowing that the Lord is Peace, and He is with you. Amen.